

Testimony of Ramani Ayer
In Opposition to H.B. 5078, *An Act Imposing a Moratorium on the
Implementation of the Common Core State Standards*
Education Committee, March 12, 2014

Good afternoon, Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and distinguished members of the Education Committee. My name is Ramani Ayer, and I am the vice-chair of the Connecticut Council for Education Reform (CCER). As a Connecticut business leader who understands the need for skilled workers and who is vitally interested in the State's economic and competitive advantage, I know how important it is for us to hold our students to high standards. However, today's public education system is failing to prepare many students to meet the needs of Connecticut's employers. I strongly believe that raising our expectations of Connecticut's students is a huge part of the solution, and it is for this reason that I oppose H.B. 5078.

The Common Core was designed collaboratively and adopted transparently. Before adoption of the standards, the Connecticut State Department of Education used multiple mediums to elicit input from stakeholders across Connecticut on the quality and utility of the standards. When Connecticut adopted Common Core almost four years ago, it was because there was widespread acknowledgment that raising the standards of achievement is part of a long-term solution that needed to be initiated immediately. Accordingly, implementation of the Common Core has already been underway for several years across the state—since their adoption in 2010. To undo that hard work now would be irresponsible.

Although I fully recognize that implementation has been difficult, I believe that the Common Core State Standards represent a critical change to our education system. Change often is difficult. However, we all know that these transition periods are worth it because we need to keep evolving in order to stay relevant.

Furthermore, it is my firmly held belief that the struggle with implementation is not something that can be overcome legislatively. This sentiment was echoed by the American Federation of Teachers' March 10th e-mail to its membership. Passing useless legislative delays will not help districts to accomplish this important work. Rather, we must continue to increase support for district-level implementation.

We have empowered our districts with the authority to write curriculums and oversee their alignment with the Common Core State Standards. The nature of this work requires district leadership to work collaboratively with core groups of teachers over an extended period of time. This is a time-intensive task that is well underway across the state. Let's not interrupt the important work that districts are doing. Instead, let's encourage school boards of education to prioritize the implementation of Common Core in a collaborative manner involving parents, teachers, and administrators.

I urge the education committee to think of constructive solutions to support Common Core implementation, rather than letting anxieties take our minds off the ultimate goal of ensuring that Connecticut students get a high quality education. For the sake of our students and our economy, I strongly oppose H.B. 5078, and I hope you will too.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Ramani Ayer